

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HEALTH OFFICIALS PROVIDE WATER SAFETY TIPS REGARDING BLUE GREEN ALGAE BLOOM IN LAKE WEIR**

Ocala—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County is advising individuals to avoid exposure to algal blooms recently detected in Lake Weir.

High levels of cyanobacteria, commonly called blue-green algae, have been detected at several locations on Lake Weir. The department has contacted the operators of public beaches on the lake, and is providing warning signs to be posted at public swimming areas.

The department recommends people refrain from recreational water uses that could result in ingestion of or skin exposure to algal blooms in the lake. Children should also not be allowed to play along the shoreline where they might be exposed to clumps of algae or drink lake water. The department also recommends that fish caught in the lake not be consumed.

Blue-green algae toxins can affect the liver, nervous system and skin. Most problems happen when water containing high toxin amounts is ingested. Abdominal cramps, nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting may occur if any untreated surface water is swallowed. Direct contact or breathing airborne droplets containing high levels of algal toxins cause irritation of the skin, eyes, nose and throat. Rashes can develop when skin is exposed to the algae. Individuals should avoid coming in to contact with a blue-green algae bloom, especially children and pets. Boiling water does not remove or destroy these toxins. For more information, see [Frequently Asked Questions: Cyanobacteria/Blue-Green Algae](#).

The Florida Department of Health is working with other state and local agencies to continue to assess concentrations of algal toxins in Lake Weir.

Additional information on health issues related to algae is available on the DOH website at [www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins](http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/).

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